

Behrens' narrative of the discovery of Easter Island: Two editions, two personalities, two realities

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This article is dedicated to the figure of Carl Friedrich Behrens, a member of the Dutch expedition led by Jacob Roggeveen, who re-discovered Easter Island in 1722. Behrens, a German soldier serving on one of the ships, left a narrative describing the whole journey. The first edition was published in 1737 followed, among others, by a re-published edition made by German anthropologist Hans Plischke that was published in 1923. The important thing is that this version differs from the original to a great extent and the editor did not account for the changes he had introduced into the text: besides grammar and orthography modernization, he omitted certain portions, misinterpreted other ones and added some comments without marking them as his own. As a result, the narrative gives an impression of having been written by another author; Behrens appears as a person with a different character and attitude, weaker, less convincing and even less trustworthy than he really was. This article presents numerous examples of the distortions as a warning against making a scientific or an anthropological use of unreliable editions of source texts, as this may wield a negative influence upon our view and interpretation of the culture we are analyzing.

Este artículo es dedicado a la figura de Carl Friedrich Behrens, un miembro de la expedición holandesa dirigida por Jacob Roggeveen, quien re-descubrió la Isla de Pascua en 1722. Behrens, un soldado alemán quien sirve en una de las naves, dejó un relato que describe toda la travesía. La primera edición fue publicada en 1737, seguida, entre otras, por una edición que fue re-publicada en 1923, escrita por un antropólogo alemán llamado Hans Plischke. La consideración importante es que esta versión difiere de la original en gran medida y el editor no dio cuenta de los cambios que había introducido en el texto: además de la modernización de la gramática y ortografía, omitió algunas partes, malinterpretó otras, y añadió algunos comentarios sin notarlos como propios. Como resultado, el relato da la impresión de haber sido escrito por otro autor; Behrens aparece como una persona con un carácter y actitud diferente, más débil, menos convincente y menos confiable de lo que realmente era. Este artículo presenta numerosos ejemplos de las distorsiones como una advertencia al uso científico o antropológico de ediciones erróneas de textos originales, ya que estas pueden ejercer una influencia negativa en nuestra visión e interpretación de la cultura que estamos analizando.

Introduction

I am working on a project that comprises the translation of all the 18th century narratives on Easter Island discovery into Polish and their extended historical and anthropological analysis. The first version of the narrative written by Carl Friedrich Behrens that I had at my disposal was its translation into English, made by Alexander Dalrymple within his collection of voyage reports. As its accuracy left much to be desired, I decided to acquire the German original of the aforementioned text. I purchased an edition issued in 1923 (edited by Hans Plischke), and translated the portions of the text that I needed for my purposes. However, what aroused my suspicions were numerous comments in brackets, inserted into the text; strange comments that sometimes create an impression that Behrens contradicts himself

and that certain passages of his story lack cohesion. I drew a conclusion that these must have been unmarked interjections by the editor. Two questions are raised. Firstly, how many of these interjections are included in the text? Secondly, are they the only changes introduced by Plischke? To examine these questions, I collated Plischke's edition with the original first edition of the text, published in 1737.

The comparison between the two versions of the narrative revealed major modifications in the 1923 edition. They can be grouped in the following general types:

- errors;
- misinterpretations and/or over-interpretations;
- omissions;
- simplifications;
- editor's comments and explanations;

- stylistic changes ('embellishing' of the original text);
- language modernization (orthography and grammar changes);
- order and sentence division changes.

The last two alterations are technical ones and are the least invasive, easy to justify, and quite common in this kind of popular re-edition (the 1923 version was published within a series of adventure books), so I will not analyze them, except for the toponyms' modernization. Nevertheless, as can be inferred from other examples, the narrative underwent a serious transformation.

Following the order I established above, I present the most representative and interesting examples of the enumerated modifications. I firstly quote chosen excerpts from both editions in chronological order, translating them into English, deliberately rendering them as literally as possible, even at the expense of style. What is most important here is the original sense of the presented quotes. I then comment upon them, giving necessary explanations. For the sake of making the quotes' recognition easier and discerning them from the main body of the article, all quoted excerpts are indented.

1. Errors

Course

"10 Meilen Westwärts von Ioan Ferdinando sahen wir die Insul Klein Ferdinando" (Behrens 1737:78-9).

[10 miles to the west from Ioan Ferdinando we saw the island Klein Ferdinando.]

"Ostwärts von Juan Fernandez sahen wir die Insel Klein Ferdnandez (wohl Masafuero)" (Behrens 1923:62).

[To the east of Juan Fernandez we saw the island Klein Fernandez (or Masafuero).]

Anchoring

"[Wir] kamen aber selbiges Tages noch nicht zu Ancker" (Behrens 1737:82).

[This same day we have not already anchored.]

"Noch am selben Tage gingen wir vor Anker" (Behrens 1923:64).

[This same day we have anchored.]

Shooting incident

"Es wurde einer von denen, welche in den Fahrzeugen waren, unversehens geschossen" (Behrens 1737:83).

[One of those who were in their boats was accidentally shot.]

"Als ein Schuß fiel [...]" (Behrens 1923:65).

[After a shot...]

Natives' behavior

"[sie] brachten Palm-Zweige und rothe und weisse Fahnen, sowohl Weiber als Kinder, und ... Hüner, lebendige, gekochte und gebratene, ja sie warffen sich zu unseren Füßen nieder" (Behrens 1737:84).

[they brought palm branches and red and white banners, as well women as children, and ... chickens, alive, cooked and roasted; they threw themselves to our feet.]

"[sie] schleppten Palmzweige, rote und weiße Fahnen, Weiber und Kinder herbei und ... lebendige, ja auch gebratene Hühner. Sie warfen alles zu unsern Füßen nieder" (Behrens 1923:66).

[they dragged palm branches, red and white banners, women and children and ... alive and also roasted chickens; they threw all to our feet.]

The first example – putting aside the distance omission – is obvious proof of the editor's inattention: he confuses compass directions. The second one is similar: it shows a typical tendency of overlooking negation (a characteristic, for instance, for students solving a multiple choice test); in the first edition, Behrens states that at the moment the ships have **not** anchored yet; in the 1923 edition they have.

The third quote is more problematic. Namely, of all available narratives of the Dutch voyage, only Behrens reports two gun-firing incidents. Except for a widely known tragedy on the shore – an accidental shooting that ended with the death of a dozen islanders – strangely, the German soldier mentions another case that is said to have occurred on board one of the ships. According to the 1737 edition, apparently an islander was wounded or even shot; Plischke is obviously confused with this information and deliberately omits it, changing the passage to a laconic expression: "After a shot..."

In my opinion, the next example contains two mistakes. One is clear: in the first version of the narrative, it is the islanders that fall to their knees in front of the newcomers. In Plischke's edition, however, they throw their gifts to the feet of the strangers. The core of the problem is the German verb used in this context in both versions: *werfen*: 'to throw'; *sich werfen*: 'to throw oneself'. But one more inconsistency can be observed in this fragment: the 1737 text seems to state that women and children – apart from adult male islanders – also came to meet the travelers, bringing various gifts; meanwhile the editor of the 1923 version decides that the islanders brought along all the mentioned objects *as*

well as women and children. For me, there is a significant difference in the attitude towards the indigenous Rapanui. I will return to this later.

2. Misinterpretations, over-interpretations

Curiosity of indigenous Rapanui

“Theils hatten sie bey 50. und hunderten niedergelassen, und sahen unsere Schiffe mit Werwunderung an” (Behrens 1737:82-3).

[Partially they were sitting [on the shore] in groups of 50, 100, and were looking with astonishment at our ships.]

“Trupps von 50 und 100 hatten sich dort niedergelassen und sahen mit Werwunderung nach unsern Schiffen herüber. Sie betrachteten sich all diese ihnen fremde Dinge” (Behrens 1923:65).

[Groups of 50, 100 sat down and looked with astonishment at our ships. They were watching all these things, strange to them.]

Huts

“...die Häuser waren 40. bis 60. Schuh lang, 6. bis 8. Schuh breit und so hoch von hölzernen Stangen aufgerichtet” (Behrens 1737:86).

[...the huts were 40 to 60 feet long, 6 to 8 feet wide and of the same height, supported by wooden posts.]

“Die Häuser waren vierzig bis sechzig Schuh lang, sechs bis acht Schuh breit und aus hölzernen Stangen hoch aufgerichtet” (Behrens 1923:67).

[The huts were forty to sixty feet long, six to eight feet wide and supported on wooden posts].

Ear piercing

“Ihre Ohren waren so lange, daß sie ihnen bis auf die Schultern hiengen; Einige hatten weisse Klötze darinnen liegend zur Bedeutung einer besondern Zierath” (Behrens 1737:87).

[Their ears were so long that they were hanging down to their shoulders. Some of them had white blocks stuck [lit. lying] there [i.e. in the hole] for a strange ornament.]

“Die Ohren hingen ihnen bis auf die Schultern herab. Viele hatten darin weiße Klötze als Zierat hängen” (Behrens 1923:68).

[Their ears were hanging down to their shoulders. many [of the indigenous Rapanui] had white blocks hanging from them for ornament.]

Natural dye

“...wir wissen aber nicht, wovon sie diese schöne Farbe machen” (Behrens 1737:88).

[...but we do not know what they make this beautiful dye of.]

“Wir wissen aber nicht, woraus sie diese schöne Farbe gewinnen” (Behrens 1923:68).

[But we do not know where they get this beautiful dye from.]

The above examples show the editor’s tendency to “read between the lines” while analyzing the original text. Sometimes he seems to understand more than was actually written; probably thanks to other narratives describing the island’s discovery by Europeans. This is clear when we see the first excerpt: Plischke puts the words about the astonishment of the indigenous Rapanui when they saw European ships into Behrens’ mouth. This astonishment is described in other voyage diaries of the 18th century, but is only mentioned in the first edition of the narrative, and Plischke elaborates on that.

The misinterpretation in the second quote again seems to result from inattention. What I understand when reading the original 1737 passage is that huts were 6-8 feet wide *and also* 6-8 feet high; moreover, they were supported by wooden posts. Plischke does not seem to notice the fact of equal width and height of the houses.

What caused the modification of the original information in the third passage might be an everyday experience of the editor: he knows, namely, that earrings are often pieces of jewelry that are hanging from the ear. And thus – despite the fact that all the contemporary texts on Easter Island describe very thoroughly an ‘exotic’ custom of ear piercing and inserting tuber pieces or sugar cane leaves in the hole – in the 1923 edition, ear ornaments are hanging, although in the 1737 version they are not.

The last quote may be another manifestation of the attitude shift between the first edition and the latter version of the text, even if a slight one: whereas the first example suggests the indigenous Rapanui were themselves producing a certain dye, in the second one Behrens asks himself where they acquire it, as if it was ready to use in a form of some plant or mineral and did not need any effort or elaboration.

3. Omissions

Reference to other authors

“Der Herr Dampier und Waffer davon melden in ihren Beschreibungen, nach der Süd-See entdeckt seyn” (Behrens 1737:78).

[Mister Dampier and Waffer inform on that in their reports, after the discovery of the South Sea.]

“Die Herren Dampier und Waffer berichten darüber” (Behrens 1923:62).

[Misters Dampier and Waffer inform on that.]

Seeking land

“Wir sahen auch viele Land-Vögel, worunter viel Pfeil-Sterten gewesen, auch haben sie würcklich gemeinet, daß wir Land gesehen hätten, auch wagirte der Wind und lieff nach dem Westen, welches ebenfalls auf allen Küsten, wo der feste Passæt-Wind wehet, ein Zeichen, daß man nicht weit vom Lande ist; alleine wir sahen jedoch, zum grösten Bestürzung unsres Admirals, kein Land Davids: ich glaube daß wir neben den Lande hingefahren, oder muß allda kein Land seyn. Diß ist gewis, daß sich alle Küsten von den Süd-Ländern meistens gegen Ost und West, oder Osten N. und Westen-Süden strecken, welches wohl eine Haupt-Ursache mit seyn mag, warum ehemals diß Süd-Land vor vielen ist unentdeckt geblieben: Denn mit den W. N. W. Cours seegelte man neben dem Lande hin, und mit den N. W. drehet man sich gar davon ab, welches ich accurat untersucht, durch Aufnehmung aller entdeckten Süd-Länder, und eine besondere Charte davon formiret habe, da es sich denn deutlich gezeigt, daß sie entweder neben den Lande hingefahren, oder mit den N. W. Cours sich gar davon abgewendet haben” (Behrens 1737:79-80).

[We also saw many land birds, among which there were many *Pfeil-Sterten* [I could not identify that species – ZJ], they could also be a sign of a land to be seen, also the wind changed and began to blow to the West, and along all the shores, where a permanent trade wind blows, this is a sign that one is not far from the land; but, to a great consternation of our Admiral, we did not see the Land of Davids. I think we went past it or there must be no land at all. What is sure is that all shores of the south lands generally extend in the direction from the East to the West, or from the N.-West to the South-West, and that may be the main reason that the South Land remained undiscovered by so many; then, following the WNW course one sailed past the land and following the NW [course] one turned away completely from it, what I examined accurately by marking all the discovered lands and making a special chart, and it can be seen very clearly that they either went past the land or, following the NW course, turned away from it.]

“Wir sahen in der Tat zahlreiche Landvögel. Einige meinten auch wirklich Land gesehen zu haben. Auch konnten wir aus dem Wind auf Landnähe schießen. Aber zur größten Bewunderung unseres Admirals erblickten wir das Davisland nicht. Entweder sind wir an ihm vorübergefahren, oder es gibt an dieser Stelle kein Land” (Behrens 1923:63).

[Actually we saw many land birds. Some [of the crew] maintained that they did see the land. Also from the wind we could reckon the proximity of land. But, to the greatest surprise of our Admiral, we did not notice the Land of Davis. We either went past it or there is no land in this place.]

Appearance of indigenous Rapanui

“...mit langen Ohren welche bis auf die Schultern herab hingen, so durchs Gewicht die Länge wohl werden bekommen haben, nach Art der Mogolischen Mohren” (Behrens 1737:81).

[...with long ears that hung down to their shoulders, probably so long because of some weight, like in case of the Moghul Negroes.]

“Die Ohrläppchen hingen bis auf die Schultern herab (wohl wegen dere Ohrpflocke)” (Behrens 1923:64).

[Their earlobes hung down to their shoulders (probably because of ear pegs).]

Glass of wine

“...wir gaben diesem Süd-Länder oder fremden Gast ein Glas Wein zu trinken; alleine er nahm solches, und stürzte es in seine Augen: worüber wir uns verwunderten; alleine ich glaube, daß er gedacht, daß man ihm dadurch vergeben wolte, welches unter denen Indianern ein allgemeiner Gebrauch ist” (Behrens 1737:81).

[We gave this Southlander or a strange guest a glass of wine to drink; but he took it and threw it into his eyes; this amazed us; but I think that he thought that we wanted to poison him, what is common among the Indians.]

“Wir gaben diesem Südländer, unserm Gast, ein Glas Wein zu trinken. Er nahm es und stürzte es in seine Augen, worüber wir uns sehr wunderten” (Behrens 1923:64).

[We gave this Southlander, our guest, a glass of wine to drink. He took it and threw it into his eyes; this amazed us much.]

Maneuvers

“...da giengen wir S. O. in einie [*sic*] Boog (Bucht) oder Einlauf zum Ancker” (Behrens 1737:82).

[then we went SE into a bay [Behrens uses three different terms to design it – ZJ] to anchor there.]

“gingen wir endlich in einer Bucht vor Anker” (Behrens 1923:64).

[eventually we went into a bay to anchor there.]

Gifts for indigenous Rapanui

“[wir] beschenckten sie mit einen Stuck Bunten Leinwand, von ungefehr 50. bis 60. Elen lang, welches sie über hundert mahl Klaffter weise gemessen” (Behrens 1737:85).

[we gave them a piece of colorful linen, about 50 to 60 ells long, which they measured over a hundred times with outstretched arms.]

“[wir] beschenkten sie mit einem Stück bunter Leinwand, die ungefehr fünfzig bis sechzig Ellen lang war” (Behrens 1923:66).

[we gave them a piece of colorful linen that was about 50 to 60 ells long.]

Storks

“Doch kan auch nicht wol seyn, daß auf der höhe von 28 ½. Grad, auf welche Breite diese Insul lieget, sich die Störche können aufhalten: denn gleichwie die Natur an diesem Vogel etwas sonderliches geleet, so muß ein jedweder mit bekennen, daß wenn der Storch ein warmes Clima suchte, würde man ihn in unseren Ländern nicht sehen: denn auf der Breite von 28 Grad, das ganze Jahr kein Winter, und also stets eine warme Luft ist: ich urtheile vielmehr, das der Storch, wann er hinweg ziehet, das Clima gegen den Süd-Pohl suchet, gleichwie er hie zu sehen gegen Norden, da derselbe aus unserem Herbst in ihren Frühling ziehet, gleich als wenn gegen dem Herbst sich alles zu seiner Nahrung verkriecht, hingegen in ihrem Frühling seine Nahrung hervor kommt und sich zwischen die 40. und 50. Grad Suder-Breite auf einigen unbekannten Ländern, oder auf dem Lande von Hernandus Gallego, welches er A. 1595. entdeckt, sich aufhalt, diß daß ihr Herbst wieder anfänget, und sodann wegen der Luft und auch der Nahrung halber seine Ruckreise nach Norden wieder antritt. Der Storch wird bey denen Gelehrten in einigen artigen Anmerckungen angezogen, wie bey dem Epiphanio, Francisci, Heldelino, Guicciardyno, Munstero und andern bewährten Scribenten, weitläufftiger zu sehen ist” (Behrens 1737:89-90).

[But it cannot be that at the height of 28 ½ degrees, at which the island lies, the storks can make a stop; regardless of any strange features that the nature could bestow upon this bird, everyone has to acknowledge that, if the stork were looking for a warm climate, it would not be seen in our country; then, at the latitude of 28 degrees there is no winter during the whole year, and the air is constantly warm; moreover, I think that the stork, when it migrates, looks for the climate near the South Pole, regardless of [what] it could find here to the north, then it migrates during our fall to look for the spring there, because in the fall all it feeds on

holes up from it [*sic*]; on the other hand, there, in the springtime, its food comes out and [the stork] stays at the latitude between 40 and 60 degrees South in some unknown lands, or in the land of Hernandus Gallego, discovered by him in 1595; and as the fall begins there, and then because of the air and of the food, it undertakes its journey back to the North. The stork was frequently mentioned in a kind manner by such learned men as Epiphanio, Francisci, Heldelino, Guicciardyno, Munstero and by other distinguished scholars.]

“Und doch spricht manches dagegen, das die Störche hierher ziehen” (Behrens 1923:69).

[And still there are reasons to believe that the storks do not migrate here.]

As I view it, all the examples of omissions in the 1923 version of the Behrens’ text result from a single general idea of the editor: the idea of offering the audience an easy-reading adventure book. That is why all the information that seemed superfluous, or ‘unnecessary’ in the course of the narration, was left out. I suppose that what reinforced the editor’s decision to delete these fragments was their style: they are often vague, rough, or sometimes incoherent. The problem, however, is precisely that these passages frequently reveal Behrens’ true character: he was an experienced soldier and seaman, who had a certain knowledge of the world, although nowadays we may consider this knowledge naïve. In the excerpts from the 1737 edition, Behrens speaks about geography, winds and charts, about supposed customs of Mughals and Indians, about climate and bird migrations, and also uses varied marine terminology. The last excerpt is particularly stunning (that is why I decided to quote it in spite of its length): the German elaborates on stork habits, wondering if the birds could or could not make a stop on Easter Island (in fact, what he saw on an Easter Islander’s head were probably frigate and not stork feathers), and in the 1923 edition, the whole passage is reduced to one short sentence.

4. Simplifications

Journey

“...wir hatten täglich einen guten Fortgang, weil uns der S. O. passat Wind treflich favorabel war” (Behrens 1737:79).

[...every day we were making a good progress, because the SE trade wind was very favorable to us.]

“Wir hatten gute Fahrt. Der Südostwind war uns sehr günstig” (Behrens 1923:63).

[We had a good ride. The south-eastern wind was very favorable to us.]

Fields

“Auch die Aecker oder das Land alles nach der Schnur accurat abgemessen, und sehr artig eingerichtet, auch war gerade um die Zeit, als wir da waren, alles in der vollkommenen Reiffe und Zeitigung; die Felder und Bäume trugen sehr reichlich ihre Früchte, und ich glaube sicherlich, daß, wenn man dieses Land recht durchsuchet hatte, daß man darinnen viel gutes würde gefunden haben” (Behrens 1737:86).

[Also the fields and the land, all of them [were] scrupulously measured up and neatly tilled, also at the time that we were there everything was in full bloom and ripe; the fields and trees yielded their rich produce, and I am sure that if we examined this land thoroughly, we would find there many good things.]

“Das Land ringsum war genau zu Ackern aufgeteilt und schön bearbeitet. Gerade um die Zeit, als wir dort waren, stand alles in voller Reife. Felder und Bäume trugen reichlich Früchte. Hätten wir dieses Land genau durchforscht, so glaube ich, wäre dort viel Nützliches gefunden worden” (Behrens 1923:67).

[The land all around was precisely divided into fields and nicely tilled. Right in the time when we were there everything stood in full bloom. Fields and trees yielded their rich produce. If we examined well this land, I think, many useful things could be found there.]

The simplification of the original narrative is a measure similar to the previous one, but operates in a slightly different manner: the message of a given excerpt is generally preserved, but made clearer or less complicated. The resulting text is lighter and easier to read. We find various examples of this in the narrative, although I decided to present only two passages that illustrate this point.

5. Editor's comments and explanations

Toponyms

“10 Meilen Westwärts von Ioan Ferdinando sahen wir die Insul Klein Ferdinando” (Behrens 1737:78-9).

[10 miles to the west from Ioan Ferdinando we saw the island Klein Ferdinando.]

“Ostwärts von Juan Fernandez sahen wir die Insel Klein Ferdnandez (wohl Masafuero)” (Behrens 1923:62).

[To the east of Juan Fernandez we saw the island Klein Fernandez (or Masafuero).]

Tattoos

“Er war sehr artig bemalet, mit allerhand Figuren” (Behrens 1737:81).

[He was very neatly painted with various figures.]

“Sein Körper war mit allerlei Figuren nett bemahlt (Tatauierung)” (Behrens 1923:63).

[His body was nicely painted with various figures (tattoos).]

Gifts for indigenous Rapanui

“...wir beschenckten sie auch mit Corallen, kleinen Spiegeln rc” (Behrens 1737:85).

[...we gave them also corals, small mirrors etc.]

“Wir gaben ihnen Korallen (Glasperlen), kleine Spiegel und anderes mehr” (Behrens 1923:66).

[We gave them corals (glass beads), a small mirror and much more.]

Food

“...eine gute Menge der Erd-Aepffel” (Behrens 1737:85).

[...a whole lot of potatoes.]

“...eine Menge Erdäpfel (wohl Bataten)” (Behrens 1923:66).

[...a lot of potatoes (or sweet potatoes).]

Banana leaves

“...das Blatt ist 2. bis 3. Fuß breit, und wohl 6. bis 8. Fuß lang. Unsere ersten Eltern sollen sich im Paradies, nach dem leidigen Sünden-Fall, mit diesen Blättern bedeckt haben” (Behrens 1737:85-6).

[...the leaf is 2 to 3 feet wide and about 6 to 8 feet long. Our first parents in paradise, after the lamentable Fall of Man, must have covered themselves with those leaves.]

“Das Blatt der Pflanze ist zwei bis drei Fuß breit und wohl sechs bis acht Fuß lang (Banane). Unsere ersten Eltern, Adam und Eva, sollen sich im Paradies, nach dem Sündenfall mit derartigen Blättern bedeckt haben” (Behrens 1923:67).

[The leaf of this plant is two to three feet wide and about six to eight feet long (banana). Our first parents in paradise, Adam and Eve, after the Fall of Man must have covered themselves with such leaves.]

Tapa

“...sie müsten Weber-Stühle haben, vermittelst deren sie solche [Decken] selbst verfertigten” (Behrens 1737:87).

[...they must have had looms with which they could make such mantles.]

“...die Einwohner müßten Webstühle besitzen, mit deren Hilfe sie sich solche Decken selbst verfertigen. (Ein Irrtum, es handelt sich hier nicht um gewebte Stoffe, sondern um Rindenstoff, die Tapa, die aus der Rinde des Papiermaulbeerbaums gewonnen wird.)” (Behrens 1923:68).

[...the inhabitants must have possessed looms with the use of which they could make such mantles. (It is a mistake, what is meant is not a woven cloth but a bark cloth, the tapa, manufactured from the paper mulberry tree.)]

Pukao

“...oben auf dem Haupt mit einer Krone geziert” (Behrens 1737:88).

[...with the head adorned with a crown.]

“Das Haupt war mit einer Krone geziert (flache Zylinder aus vulkanischem Gestein)” (Behrens 1923:69).

[The head was adorned with a crown (a flat cylinder of the volcanic rock).]

It is a common procedure to insert editor’s remarks in certain old texts, but it is also common knowledge that it has to be obvious which parts of a text derive from the author and which from the editor of a given publication. In case of the Behrens’ narrative published in 1923, it is not always obvious. In Plischke’s times, the practice of preparing critical editions was quite developed. As a comparison, I can refer to a 19th century Polish project on the methodology of editing old Polish literature (Pilat 1886:97-106); the author gives his fellow scholars the example of Germany as a country which was considerably advanced in the field of critical editions. As to his postulates, Pilat appeals for preserving the original, authentic text ‘as it was written’; he states:

“Unfortunately, as we know by experience, the works by older as well as newer writers rarely arrive to us in their original form. Under the influence of various circumstances they usually get corrupt to a greater or lesser extent. Copyists’ errors, typesetters’ mistakes and omissions, and even changes and corrections introduced freely by printers and editors, accumulate slowly, multiply within successive editions, become generally accepted, transform the author’s thought and sometimes result in such considerable changes that the given text gets published not in one, but in several different editions” (Pilat 1886:100 [translation by the present author]).

Then, Pilat elaborates, among other things, on the verification of authenticity, on examining different text

variants (and giving an account of them) and on the most necessary restitution of the original form of the work; he even refers to “one of the most prominent German editors” (without giving his name) in whose opinion an editor acts as a spokesman of the author (Pilat 1886:104). As can easily be seen, the 1923 edition of Behrens fails to fulfill these postulates.

Despite this, Plischke has not included any chapter or note in the book that would give an account of the methods he used to elaborate and prepare the narrative for the re-edition. Nor does he use any kind of footnotes. As a result, some of his remarks quoted above give an amusing impression that Behrens states some fact or describes a situation and, immediately after that, contradicts or corrects himself. The most absurd example is the quote referring to *tapa*, in which Behrens describes a type of presumably woven fabric used by the islanders and from the message in brackets we learn that it is a mistake and what he saw was a cloth made from paper mulberry bark.

In other instances we cannot be readily aware of the editor’s interference, as in the case when he adds alternative names of the Juan Fernández Islands, a definition of a *pukao*, or explains that an indigenous custom of ‘body painting’ often was actually a practice of tattooing. Only a reader familiar with the matters described would realize that given passages were subject to some alteration.

6. Style changes

Appearance of indigenous Rapanui

“Er hatte eine ziemliche Länge, war ziemlich stark von Gliedern, und gut von Gesicht, munter von Gestalt, angenehm im Reden und Geberden” (Behrens 1737:81).

[He was quite tall, with quite strong limbs, with a good face, a lively figure, pleasant in talk and gestures.]

“Er war ziemlich groß und stark von Körperbau. Seine Gesichtszüge waren angenehm, seine Gebärden und Reden nicht ungeschickt” (Behrens 1923:64).

[He was quite tall and of a strong constitution. His features were pleasant, his talk and gestures not awkward.]

Maneuvers

“...wir schifften noch einige Tage hier herum, und thaten alle Coursen, die auf den Compas waren: alleine hie war kein Davids-Land zu sehen” (Behrens 1737:91).

[...for some days we were navigating to and fro, trying all courses that were to be found on the compass; but there was no Land of Davids to be seen.]

“Wir kreuzten noch einige Tage in diesem Meere herum und suchten in allen Himmelsrichtungen nach Land. Aber nirgends war das Davisland zu erblicken” (Behrens 1923:70).

[For some days we were sailing [cruising/tacking; the verb *kreuzen* is ambiguous – ZJ] to and fro through these seas, searching for the land in all directions. But the Land of Davis was nowhere to behold.]

The style modifications introduced by Plischke go far beyond the simple procedure of editing and modernizing a book. To tell the truth, the editor literally rewrites every sentence. He polishes almost every case of roughness, ‘embellishes’ grammar structures, uses more refined phrases and diversified vocabulary. He turns colloquialisms used by Behrens into a more sophisticated language. This can be observed in all the passages quoted above, so I present just two appropriate examples to illustrate this phenomenon above.

7. Other changes

“...auch wiesen sie auf ihre Weibsbilder, ob wir etwan mit denselben in ihre Hütten wolten gehen, oder sie auf die Schiffe mitnehmen?” (Behrens 1737:85).

[...they were also pointing at their women, [as if asking] whether perhaps we wanted to go with them to their huts or take them on board.]

“Dazu wiesen sie auf ihre Weibsbilder, ob wir sie vielleicht mit auf die Schiffe nehmen oder ob wir mit ihnen in ihre Hütten gehen wollten” (Behrens 1923:66).

[Besides they were pointing at their women, [as if asking] whether perhaps we wanted to take them on board or go with them to their huts.]

The excerpt quoted above shows an unnecessary change of order introduced by Plischke; it makes no difference which element of the sentence comes first and which is next. Needless to say, many of his other operations on the narrative seem unfounded. And, moreover, they cannot be justified, as they alter the original text.

I previously mentioned the tendency to modify toponyms as an example of updating Behrens' text. As a result, we encounter the following place names:

1737 edition	1923 edition
Lande Davids, Davids-Land	Davisland
Ioan Ferdinando	Juan Fernandez
Klein Ferdinando	Klein Fernandez, Masafuero (<i>sic</i>)
Pasch-Eilandt, Oster-Land	Paasch-Eiland, Osterinsel
Schautten (<i>sic</i>) / Schouten	von Schouten entdeckten Inseln
schlecht Wasser	

I am not opposing the modernization of the toponyms, especially because centuries ago, there were no strict regulations of their spelling. However, in my opinion, for the sake of preserving the spirit of the original, a separate remark or some footnotes should be added, to give an account of which versions of the names were used by Behrens in the first edition.

Another question relates to the versions proposed by Plischke. Some of them are still incorrectly spelled, which is a surprise to me, as the editor was an educated scientist and a professional anthropologist. ‘Klein Fernandez’ – called Alejandro Selkirk today – was then properly called ‘Más Afuera’.

‘Paasch-Eiland’ is an old version of the Dutch name of Easter Island, which now, after an orthography reform, is Paaseiland. In the journal by Roggeveen himself, published in 1838, an almost identical spelling, ‘Paasch Eyland/Eiland’, was used (Roggeveen 1838:101). At the beginning of the 20th century, around the time when Plischke's version of the narrative by Behrens was edited, the journal of Bouman – discovered almost 200 years after Roggeveen's voyage and then published – referred to the island as ‘Paascheyland’ (Mulert 1911:143). Nevertheless, I was told that this spelling was incorrect as well (von Saher pers. comm. 2012).

It is also worth mentioning that the editor even changes the name of one of Roggeveen's ships: the ‘Africanische Galeere’, translated into German in the first edition of the narrative, in the 1923 version is called ‘Afrikanische Galey’. It is another failed attempt to return to the original Dutch proper noun, which was ‘Afrikaansche Galey’, here again in the modern spelling. In the journal by Roggeveen, we read ‘Africaansche Galey’ (Roggeveen 1838:101). Around the time of Plischke's abridged book publication, in Bouman's journal, it was spelled ‘Affricaanse Galley’ (Mulert 1911:139), again incorrectly (von Saher pers. comm. 2012).

One might also wonder why Behrens calls the Schouten Islands ‘Schouten schlecht Wasser’ (literally, ‘Schouten Bad Water’). As I have no access to Schouten's original narrative and cannot look up how he personally describes the discovery of these islands, all I could resort to were online versions of books of the type I consider rather unreliable: second-hand collections of narratives, early English compilations of travel stories proceeding from different countries. The Internet is a rich source for these kinds of texts (I also found a two-volume collection by Dalrymple), but it is also possible to get access to valuable scanned materials, such as the 1st edition of the journal by Roggeveen or the complete works by Georg Forster. As for the Schouten voyage, one of the mentioned books is *Terra Australis Cognita* by John Callander (1768) and the other is *A General History and Collection of Voyages and Travels* by Robert Kerr (1824). The first is a scanned book, while the second

is an already elaborated html text. Both publications confirm that while Schouten and his crew stayed around the aforementioned islands, there was an earthquake that made them very frightened (Callander 1768:257; Kerr 1824). Firstly, I supposed that this is a reason for the supposed bad reputation of these waters. Nevertheless, Herbert von Saher explained to me that the true cause of the so-called *slecht water* (in Dutch) is the phenomenon of vehement waves produced when the wind strikes a rocky coast, gets refracted and makes the breakers roll in the opposite direction. When these waves meet regular oceanic waves, they lose their regularity, the sea turns rough, and – on one hand – it causes a difficult situation for ship crews, but – on the other hand – they can expect to arrive at some land before discerning it on the horizon (von Saher pers. comm. 2012).

Conclusion

When comparing the two editions of Behrens' narrative, one may have an impression that this is not the same text. Although it may sound paradoxical, it seems to be translated from German to German. The editor acted at his own will, without consideration for the original spirit and message of the story. He even changed the title of the work and chapter titles.

In the first edition of his narrative, in 1737, Behrens appears to us as an experienced, stubborn soldier that possesses a certain knowledge base and convictions. He may not be a skilled writer and he surely shows a tendency to confabulate, but he knows how to justify his points of view and defend his opinions. In comparison, in the 1923 edition, Behrens seems to be a pretentious man with a musket, but without character or charisma.

In my opinion, this has quite serious consequences as to the way in which the Rapanui culture is presented to us and how we perceive it from the perspective of this particular narrative. It is a known fact that the first published news about Easter Island were the so-called 'anonymous sailor's narratives' (included in *Kort en nauwkeurig verhaal...*, 1727, and *Tweejaarige Reyze rondom de Wereld...*, 1728). But when Behrens' story appeared in 1737, it was this text that was considered as a credible report. However, when the journal of Roggeveen was found and published in 1838, in a moment when the public also knew the narratives by Cook and Forster, Behrens' text was disregarded as unreliable and full of confabulations. Now, taking into consideration such circumstances, if we read a simplified, nearly falsified version of the narrative, through which we see its author as a plain, boring soldier without personality, we will treat him with mistrust and underestimate his relation.

Moreover, I pointed out two cases when the 1923 edition changes the meaning of Behrens' words and judgments about the islanders. In the excerpt concerning

the indigenous inhabitants' behavior towards the Dutch, according to the 1st edition it can be inferred that male and female Rapanui came together to meet the travelers, while in Plischke's edition we read that male islanders brought women with them. Needless to say, the first version roughly suggests to us that the German soldier sees men and women more or less on equal terms, at least when speaking of the foreign culture he met on the discovered island. The second excerpt deals with a kind of a natural dye used by the indigenous Rapanui. In the 1737 edition, Behrens has no doubt that the islanders are able to produce it; this same fragment in the 1923 version sounds more cautious in respect of the islanders' skills: "...where they get this beautiful dye from." Both of the excerpts mentioned here refer to nuances; the focus shift is slight, but it still contributes to the shedding of a different light on the culture we are discussing.

Perhaps the phenomena treated in this article would not be worth analyzing if it were not for the fact that many scientists and researchers who study the course of events related to the European discovery of Easter Island want to refer to the narrative by Behrens. However, due to a lack of availability or linguistic barriers, they use English or French translations, or newer German editions such as the one edited by Plischke. Often they are unaware of the grave alterations present in a given text. If the German edition of 1923 is so negligent, what can we expect of old French or English versions, prepared in times when people were striving for editorial success and not for accuracy? This problem concerns not only the narrative by Behrens; I also know of abridged, popular editions of Georg Forster's work that were published in German and Polish. Presently, when the world has virtually no real mysteries for us (at least when it comes to geographic discoveries), and technological progress has made our lives hasty and hectic, people tend to seek out easy entertainment —when it comes to books as well. Nowadays, the old travel stories do not teach us about the world, but serve to amuse us; that is why many editors distort and simplify them, sometimes without admitting it explicitly enough. And not all the researchers are careful or competent enough to resort to the original diaries and *memoirs*.

However, I am aware of one more aspect of the whole situation that I see as problematic. If the edition edited by Plischke is so different from the first edition of the book, then how different is the first edition from the original manuscript? I cannot appeal for studying only hand-written documents, as this would be a Utopian idea, but I do appeal for scientific precision.

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